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ABSTRACT

In order to collect information that would aid administrators of public library film collections with self-assessment and planning, a questionnaire was sent to administrators of 63 public library film collections, including each of the 23 collections in New York State. Replies were received from representatives of 38 collections; of these 18 were in New York State. Data were tallied and analyzed to determine current trends with respect to film collections in the following areas: collection and circulation growth, financial support, usage patterns (types of users and types of use), the development of cooperative and centralized collections, the impact of video technology, and the short- and long-term prospects for film libraries. Responses indicated that film is a much-used resource that serves a large and diverse audience. A majority of respondents also indicated that demand for and circulation of film collections is increasing. Heaviest users of film collections were found to be service organizations or agencies such as day care centers, hospitals, and adult clubs. Many responding libraries had suffered budget cutbacks which affected film services. In the opinion of most respondents, the long-term future of public library film collections depends on the development and standardization of video technology. Data are presented in seven tables. (Author/JL)

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THE PRESENT STATUS AND LIKELY FUTURE OF PUBLIC LIBRARY FILM SERVICE

by

Joseph W. Palmer

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THE PRESENT STATUS AND LIKELY FUTURE OF PUBLIC LIBRARY FILM SERVICE

In these times of fiscal uncertainty and rapid technological change, administrators of public library film collections will be called upon to prove the worth of film services and to make decisions that will have a lasting impact on their quality and viability. To make informed decisions, they must be aware of current trends and options. Furthermore, they must consider crucial developments that could alter film service in the near and foreseeable future.

In order to gather information that might help film administrators with self-assessment and planning, a questionnaire was mailed in May and June 1981 to 66 film administrators including 40 in libraries or systems outside New York State and 26 within the state. This r presented a sample of very large and medium sized collections outside the state and all 23 system collections within the state. (In three cases, a New York State collection was a joint city-county collection with both a city and a county administrator.) Thus the administrators queried represented 63 separate collections.

They were questioned about:

- the rate of collection growth
- changes in circulation rates
- cutbacks in the system in general and in the film department
- expansions of resources or services within the film department
- main users of the film collection
- amount and nature of in-library programming
- use of circuits, cooperatives, state-wide collections
- video as a possible replacement for 16mm film
- their suspicions about what the state of public library film service will be in twenty years
- their predictions for developments in their library within the next five years

Responses Received

A total of forty responses representing thirty-eight collections was received - twenty from outside New York State and twenty (representing eighteen collections) from within New York State.

Responses from outside the state were biased towards the larger collections - they included fourteen collections with more than 2,000 films and six with fewer than 2,000 films.[1]

New York State responses were, however, biased towards the medium-sized and smaller collections.[2] There are six collections of more than 2,000 films in the state; data were received from only three of these. However, representatives of fifteen of the seventeen collections with under 2,000 films did reply.

While the biases may complement each other, patterns of response and non-response should be considered when evaluating the findings of this survey.

Collection Growth

Table I summarizes responses relative to collection growth and circulation change in 1980 for each of the thirty-eight collections. It also offers brief remarks on reasons for changes, cutbacks and expansions, relative use by schools and individuals, availability of video formats and occasionally other topics. Sometimes it updates statistics for 1980 with remarks on the status of the collection in 1981 and/or prospects for 1982. The reader may find it useful to browse through this Table before reading the rest of this paper.

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1 Respondents included: Leon Drolet (Suburban Library System, Ill.), Jacqueline Ek (Indianapolis-Marion Co. P.L., In.), Gail Helyer (Russell Library, Ct.), James Limbacher (Ford Centennial Library, Mi.), Patricia Lora (Toledo-Lucas Co. P.L., Oh.), Euclid Peltier (Boston P.L., Ma.), William Speed (Los Angeles P.L., Ca.), Martha Spencer (Montgomery Co. P.L., Md.), and twelve others who wished to be anonymous.

2 Respondents included: Robert Barnes (Rochester P.L), Thomas Bindeman (Nioga Library System), Don Fleishman (Niagara Falls, P.L.), Bob Gurn (Buffalo/Erie Co. P.L.), Jean Haynes (Chautauqua-Cattaragus Library System), Phillip Levering (Suffolk Cooperative Library System), Patricia Mackey (Monroe Co. Library System), Michael Miller (Mid-Hudson Library System), Stanley Ransom (Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System), Edgar Sanford (Onondaga Co. P.L.), Alice Traister (Wayne and Ontario Co. Library System). Nine wished to be anonymous.

TABLE I

FILM COLLECTION GROWTH AND CIRCULATION CHANGE IN 1980 WITH SOME REMARKS ON THE PRESENT STATUS OF FILM SERVICE

Libraries Outside New York State (n=20)

Collection Size	Collection Growth	Circulation Growth	Films Added/Withdrawn	Circulation/ Audience Reached
10,000+	Greatly Increased	About Same	600/300	54,000/1,500,000

(80-81 film dept. budget was largest ever, but it has been CUT IN HALF for 81-82. Staff down 5 full-time, 3 part-time people. Since 1980, system has had no-hire policy. Central library staff is down 300 from 600. Great increase in use of children's films by clubs/organizations and by librarians for programming - attributed in part to the poor quality of commercial children's television. Films are lent to schools but not to individuals for home use. Videocassettes/discs not presently owned.)

4,800	Somewhat Lower	About Same	450/100	75,000/..?..

(Current emphasis on feature length films means fewer titles are acquired. Budget has not increased to meet inflation resulting in cutbacks. Need new film catalog . Schools not served; individuals = no. 1 users. Videocassettes circulated by system but not handled by film dept. Adult programs usually consist of Hollywood features which are often rented.)

4,200	About Same	About Same	130/35	21,000/630,000

(Budget will be CUT 40% IN 81-82 so acquisitions will be down; there have been budget cutbacks since 1978 at which time all film programming except for once a month Children's Division program was eliminated. Slight rise in film fees two years ago resulted in circulation drop. System almost bankrupt - staff firings, hours, services cutbacks; divisions are being merged and three supervisors demoted. Schools = no. 1 users; individual use is no. 5 in rank. No video formats owned.)

4,200	Much Lower	?	150/50	?

(System-wide cuts have affected all library units; administration remains supportive of AV dept. Cuts in all areas and all units. Schools not served; individual use is moderate. Videocassette collection started July 1981.)

3,975	About Same	Greatly Increased	442/10	41,226/1,419,193

(Film collection built from scratch in past 6 years - tremendous growth in budget, staff, collection, circulation. Heavy support in form of LSCA funds. Growing population. No cutbacks in dept or in system. Schools = no.1 users; individuals = no. 5. Great increase in use by both. 3/4 inch videocassettes only.)

3,100 About Same | Greatly Increased | 150/10 | 53,863/3,576,686

(No cutbacks in film dept or in library system - remaining at same levels as previous years. Great increase in circulation due to new policy of circulating to individuals. These have become no. 1 users in this large urban area. Schools are served but rank no. 6 in use. Programming for children and for adults is heavy and increasing - a mix of short film programs and Hollywood features - usually from the library collection. Videocassettes circulated by film dept.)

2,623 Much Lower | Somewhat Lower | 54/147 | 42,932/2,544,067

(Film division budget was cut 85% in 1980 but restored somewhat in December so acquisitions will be up in 81. Slight decline in circulation attributed to lack of new films and extensive weeding which eliminated heavily used titles for which replacements could not be acquired. Use by both schools and individuals is high, ranking no. 1 and no. 2 respectively. Film budget cut reflected a system-wide decrease in the materials budget. Videocassettes now circulated - a new service.)

2578 Somewhat Lower | Somewhat Lower | 120/40 | 31,550/640,213

(While the budget has remained the same, the cost of films has increased. A trend towards borrowing longer films has resulted in a decline in the number of films circulated. Furthermore, this large urban area is suffering from a loss of population and school closings. Both individuals and schools are heavy users of the collection, ranking no. 2 and no. 3 respectively. Use by individuals is showing a great increase. Video formats not owned.)

2534 About Same | Somewhat Increased | 262/90 | 50,133/--?--

(In 1981, all aid to public libraries with state funds was eliminated necessitating cuts in all areas of library service for this year - the 1981 film budget is about 12% below 1980. There is hope that some of these funds may be reinstated. The increase in circulation results from a move to select films aimed at broad general audiences rather than classrooms or specialized groups. Both schools and individuals are served and rank no. 1 and no. 2 as users of this collection which serves the suburbs of a large urban area in which the inner city population/schools/ and film use are declining. Videocassette collection was planned for 1981 but had to be deferred because of budget cuts.)

2500 Somewhat Lower | Much Lower | 75/25 | 25,000/1,200,000

(Budget has been constant but inflation has reduced buying power. Introduction of a service charge in mid-1979 resulted in a severe drop in circulation. Use by individuals is high; by schools is low. Introduction of videocassette and video disc collections has led to heavily used phone lines making it difficult for film users to get through.)

2272 About Same | About Same | 198/84 | 32,707/1,467,715

(Budget was doubled in 1975 - has remained stable since; inflation may hamper collection growth in the future. System has suffered some staff reductions - by attrition - film dept unaffected. Heavy use by schools (no. 1 rank); low use by individuals (no. 6 rank) in this urban/suburban system. No video formats.)

2250 Somewhat Increased | Somewhat Lower | 188/464 | 21,509/869,364

(The dept has been receiving state and federal monies in the past few years to develop collection in exchange for extending service to smaller libraries in this part of the state. Heavy use by these libraries resulted in great circulation increases in the three years prior to 1980. Ultimately had some negative effect on circulation since loans to these libraries result in films being unavailable for over two weeks versus 3-4 days locally. No catalog published for over two years - experience shows publication of new catalog results in large increases in circulation. 25% of budget in past three years devoted to replacement of films and footage (note heavy weeding) to insure print quality and 25% has been devoted to building childrens collection. Heavy use by schools (no. 1 rank); low use by individuals (no. 6). System has instituted extensive cuts after failure to pass tax increase, but film dept unaffected. The library circulates videocassettes but these are not handled by film dept.)

2200 Somewhat Lower | Somewhat Lower | 200/15 | 24,659/2,205,249

(One of five film centers in the state; presently undergoing major changes. Until now, primarily funded with LSCA monies administered by state library. LSCA funding is being phased out; a legislative package which would provide state funds is being considered by the legislature. Ultimate outcome uncertain. Total funding will be drastically reduced before it is restored - if ever. Lower circulation is result of procedural changes made to discourage use by teachers (currently no. 1 users; individuals = no. 6). Attempt is being made to phase out service to teachers and redirect services towards children, senior citizens, institutionalized adults; will result in fewer films of interest to educated adults. It is anticipated that the entire library system will experience serious cuts in the next year or two. No video formats.)

2038 Somewhat Increased | Somewhat Increased | 163/69 | 34,890/1,226,632

(Passage of tax levy resulted in great expansion of av dept - new, enlarged facilities, longer hours, new video resources/services. Large increase in circulation in the two years prior to 1980 due partly to development of feature film collection; more modest in 1980 partly due to some users switching to ½ inch video for features. Prime users = institutions and service agencies in this city/county system, but heavy use by both schools and individuals also. Neither system nor film dept have suffered any cutbacks. Videocassettes circulated = new service.)

1500 Somewhat Increased | Greatly Increased | 250/15 | 25,635/1,227,325

(The film dept has had an increase in budget over past three years; neither system nor film dept have suffered cutbacks, but it is highly likely there will be a funding cut this year or next as national level cutbacks reach local level. Circulation increase attributed to (1) acquisition of newer, more relevant non-curriculum films (heavily used by individuals and teachers), (2) policy of lending 16mm projectors to individuals for home use. Great increase in borrowing by teachers (no. 1 rank) and by individuals (no. 3 rank) in this city/county system. Programming a mix of short film programs and Hollywood features including occasional rental films. No video formats.)

1400 Somewhat Lower | Somewhat Increased | 45/19 | 30,000/350,000

(System and film dept have experienced severe cuts - av staff of 9 reduced to 2; NO NON-BOOK MONEY FOR FISCAL YEAR '82. Schools/teachers no. 1 users; low but somewhat increased use by individuals (rank = no. 4). Videocassettes circulated by film dept.)

1375 Somewhat Increased | Somewhat Increased | 60/4 | 14,218/--?--

(Regional film center - teachers are no. 1 users; individuals rank no. 5. No cutbacks in system or film dept. No video formats.)

1200 Somewhat Lower | Somewhat Increased | 40/20 | 31,894/543,361

(Film dept has suffered budget cuts; constant threats of worse. System has severe cuts in all areas for 81-82; film dept just affected in budget and collection growth. Some film funds diverted to videocassettes and to preparation of new film catalog. Demand for films is steadily increasing but 80% turn down on first choice of film despite 3 week advance request time requirement. 40% of films come from regional, multi-state cooperative system. Some users are switching to videocassette when possible. Heavy use by teachers (no. 1 in rank) and by individuals (no. 3) in this District of Columbia suburb. Heavy in-library programming - mix of short film programs and Hollywood features - usually from own collection. Growing videocassette collection.)

900 About Same | About Same | 75/8 | 11,870/654,297

(Despite budget cuts, new and larger av facility with longer hours. Schools no.1 users; individuals no. 5. Film programs often include discussion. Videocassettes handled by film dept for in-house use only.)

600 Somewhat Increased | Somewhat Increased | 4/5 | 24,163/1,202,081

(By purchasing preview prints at a great savings was able to stretch film budget. Increased circulation attributed to more use by schools and more exposure of the film service within the community. Film use by teachers is heavy; by individuals is low, but both are increasing moderately. 25% of films circulated come from the state library and the Connecticut Film Circuit. Films are also rented on a monthly basis from a university film library. Video formats not available.)

New York State Film Collections (n=18)

Collection Size	Collection Growth	Circulation Growth	Films Added/Withdrawn	Circulation/ Audience Reached
5,200	About Same	Somewhat Increased	400/250	32,401/--?--

(Despite inflation, taking advantage of "fire sales" and volume discounts has enabled acquisitions to be stable. Decrease in city and county funds as well as LSCA and other grant funds has caused cutbacks in the system but - except for small reduction in hours - film dept not affected. Film use by colleges, suburban schools, parochial schools is increasing. Collection serves libraries in the county and adjacent counties via cooperative systems - use by these outlying libraries is steadily increasing. Use by teachers (no. 1 rank) and individuals (no. 3) is high and increasing. Videocassettes are circulated through the film dept. Videodiscs are on order but will be handled through the county system rather than the city library which owns the film collection.)

2,300	Somewhat Increased	Greatly Increased	350/18	30,549/--?--

(1979-80 were high budget years in compensation for poor funding in 1976-78. 1981 funds will be cut in half, i.e. back to normal. Film circulation increase largely due to release of new catalog plus better publicity. Use by teachers (no. 4) and individuals (no.5) is heavy but not as great as by libraries for programming, clubs and organizations, and institutions and hospitals. Great increase in use by nursing homes. New services include videocassettes, videodiscs and some program production for cable tv.)

2,139	Somewhat Increased	Somewhat Increased	123/49	17,813/300,000

(After a period of decrease circulation is increasing again. Recent years have seen a shift to feature length films which reduces number of titles acquired and circulated. Trying to remove and/or replace damaged and dated films. Film damage is increasing. Schools not served. Use by individuals is moderate (no.5). Institutions and hospitals = no. 1 users. Programming is a mix of short film programs and Hollywood features. No video formats owned.)

1,900	Somewhat Increased	Greatly Increased	121/21	20,000/800,000

(Growth rate slowing due to inflation and increased film costs. The system has suffered losses in funding but, due to its popularity, film dept has not been targeted for cuts. Economic problems have caused groups that used to rent films and individuals who went to the movies to use the library for free materials. Schools not served; use by individuals is moderate. Number 1 users = institutions and hospitals; no. 2 = service agencies. Great increase in use by summer camps. Funds have been appropriated to automate av services and network it to other systems. Rapidly growing videocassette collection.)

1857 About Same | Somewhat Lower | 124/52 | 24,238/332,608

(System has suffered serious problems with funding, but no cuts have been made in the film dept. Inflation is having an impact however. Circulation was intentionally depressed in 1980 when an inspection machine broke down and was out of service and a staff member was lost because of maternity leave. Walk-in borrowing without reservation was halted and rules on maximum of 60 min. of film were enforced more rigidly. Dept. is close to the upper limit of what it can handle; circulation is limited by supply not demand - core of very entertaining films always booked and unavailable. Schools not served; individuals rank no. 5. No. 1 users = institutions and hospitals. Videocassettes on order.)

1596 About Same | Somewhat Increased | 37/49 | 15,881/100,000+

(Schools and teachers = no.2 rank; individuals no. 3. Great increase in use by individuals. Further details not given. 3/4 inch videocassettes circulated by film dept.)

1529 Somewhat Lower | Somewhat Increased | 125/39 | 14,723/397,598

(Rising prices and expenditures for replacement footage have reduced buying power. Great increase in use by individuals - attributed to dissatisfaction with tv and movies. Also great increase in use by nursing homes. In-library programming = no. 1 type of use; Schools = no. 2; individuals = no. 4. System has suffered varied cuts as a result of the failure of income to rise with inflation. Position of Audio-Visual Consultant eliminated. System lends 3/4 inch videocassettes only - not handled by film dept. Have been doing considerable in-house video production - expect this to be cut back.)

1429 About Same | About Same | 146/12 | 16,325/809,630

(This is a collection in a city library which is jointly owned by the regional library system. While overall circulation is stable, circulation to member libraries has shown great and continuous increase over past five years - attributed to greater awareness and better delivery system. Schools = no. 1 users; individuals = no. 5. City funds have remained stable but increases in costs have necessitated cutbacks; county materials budget cut about 35%. Sunday closing resulted in a big cut in library programming. New service = videocassette collection. These are circulated by the film dept.)

1378 Somewhat Lower | Somewhat Increased | 122/60 | 17,980/436,268

(Special funds from LSCA projects gone. Film costs have risen. Some of film budget now diverted to videocassettes. Due to anticipated reductions in county budget, library has made large cuts in all areas - especially personnel. Film dept hit in all areas. Two of three professional positions unfilled or eliminated in 1980 - "Film Librarian", "Video Coordinator". Innovative video circuit - production - cable services elim-

inated. However, videocassette circulation in VHS format added in 1981. Increase in circulation attributed to starting an open shelf - immediate charge out collection of 50 to 60 films. Normally a two week advance reservation is required for films. Acquisition of 75 feature films has led to increased adult programming in all branches. Schools are not served, Use by individuals is moderate (rank = no. 5) but increasing. Institutions and hospitals (nursing homes) are no. 1 users. Social agencies with budget cuts are turning to the library for free materials.)

1315 About Same | About Same | 50/0 | 15,420/523,422

(Growth about the same or a little less because budget doesn't get raised. System has not suffered cutbacks. 16mm circulation about the same despite heavy use of videocassettes - in some cases by those who would otherwise use film - because they represent newer titles and are feature films. Schools are not served, use by individuals is moderate. Main users (no. 1) are institutions and hospitals (nursing homes).)

1282 Somewhat Lower | Greatly Increased | 96/2 | 18,017/677,791

(Rate of growth reduced because of modest decline in system support and decline in funds from state agency which has been assisting the dept coupled with increased cost of films. Circulation has increased 8% - previous increases somewhat higher. Cuts in staff in 1981 led to the decision to limit hours, number of films per loan and reduction in programming assistance. Reductions in equipment budget have made it difficult to maintain and replace projectors for patron loan. A cable series is being planned. Entire system has suffered cutbacks due to some loss of funding. Individuals are no. 1 users; schools are no. 5. Use by both groups is increasing. 3/4 inch video cassettes only are circulated by the film dept.)

980 Much Lower | Somewhat Increased | 100/30 | 17,960/200,000

(Population loss, non-passage of critical legislation, anticipated cuts in state funds have led to cuts in all system services including film dept - in 1981 the position of Audiovisual Consultant was eliminated as well as other reductions in budget, staff, hours, services. Probable reason for modest increase in circulation is better and newer films particularly for children. Use by individuals is moderate (no. 4); schools are not served. Greatest use by service agencies, institutions and hospitals especially nursing homes. No video formats.)

967 Greatly Increased | Greatly Increased | 53/0 | 6,141/168,887

(Despite budget cut for film dept, grant from New York State Council on the Arts made it possible to increase acquisitions. The system has suffered great losses in income due to reduced county funding plus inflation - freeze on hiring. Film dept budget was cut in 1981 20%. Increased circulation attributed to: more films, new catalog, and better promotion of service. Neither schools nor individuals are served. No. 1 use = in-library programming. No video formats.)

862 About Same | Greatly Increased | 38/13 | 8,236/167,458

(Both the system and the film dept have suffered cuts in budget and staff. Great increase in circulation to children's groups and to individuals for home use (= no. 1 users). Schools and teachers not served. Heavy use by day care centers. No video formats.)

849 Somewhat Lower | Somewhat Increased | 59/15 | 8,056/264,351

(Film prices have risen but budget remains the same. Increased circulation attributed to increased publicityand more assistance being given to thoses planning and presenting programs. The Outreach Dept has made a push for film usage in the institutions it serves - day care centers, nursing homes, sr. citizens centers, jails. Use by individuals is heavy (rank = no. 3); schools and teachers are not served. Great increase in circulation to children's groups. Videocassette collection and playback unit recently purchased with LSCA funds.)

756 About Same | About Same | 30/12 | 8,112/253,126

(Funding has remained the same. No cuts in system or dept so far. '82 may be different. Moderate use by individuals (no.4) and by schools (no.6). Clubs and organizations = no. 1. Heavy use by hospitals, nursing homes, prisons. Only video format is 3/4 inch videocassettes for in-house viewing.)

748 Somewhat Increased | About Same | 54/0 | 6,587/152,710

(Despite a cut in the book budget, an additional $5,000 was allocated for film purchases. This was because of the great popularity of films especially for in-library programs (no. 1 rank in use) and by institutions and hospitals including nursing homes. Neither schools nor individuals are served. No video formats.)

730 Greatly Increased | Somewhat Increased | 79/7 | 8,002/436,288

(Extra LSCA funds in 1980 caused acquisitions to be almost double. Among system cuts in 1981 - special book collections, all audio materials, all books by mail are being phased out. 1981 saw the first cut ever in the film budget - this will mean fewer acquisitions. 1975-79 saw a great increase in utilization as a result of collection expansion, limited availabilty of recreational and informational materials from other sources in the communities served. Schools rank no.1 in use; individuals no. 5. Use by both categories is increasing. 3/4 inch videocassettes are circulated by the film dept. Growing involvement with video resulted in a staff member being added - transferred from book services.)

Rates of collection growth in 1980 (Table II) appear evenly divided: Greatly Increased = 7.9%, Somewhat Increased = 23.7%, About the Same = 34.2%, Somewhat Lower = 26.3%, Much Lower = 7.9%. Closer scrutiny reveals a negative trend.

One large collection outside New York and two smaller collections within the state reported 1980 growth was "greatly increased". They added 600, 79, and 53 films respectively. The large collection had the largest budget ever in 1980-81, BUT the 1981-82 budget has been cut in half. The smaller collections were able to expand their acquisitions because of special funds from LSCA or the New York State Council on the Arts. It is well known that future funds from such sources are expected to be much diminished. In addition, both of these libraries report film budgets were cut in 1981.

Nine collections reported 1980 growth was "somewhat increased"; two of these anticipate cuts in the current year. Others indicated the film department had not been scheduled for cuts - because of the popularity of the service - despite reductions in other departments. Two reported a very substantial expansion of film services in recent years. One was the beneficiary of increased tax levies. The other has received substantial federal and state funds in exchange for providing film service to smaller libraries in the region.

Some of these libraries and some libraries reporting 1980 growth was "about the same" commented on the effects of inflation which limit acquisitions unless the budget also increases. Few seemed to anticipate a growing budget in the near future. Several with 1980 growth "about the same" reported 1981 budget cuts.

Thirteen collections experienced "somewhat lower" or "much lower" collection growth in 1980. Some reasons given were: 1) the rise in film costs combined with a film budget that did not keep up with inflation, 2) increasing patron demand for feature length films - this means fewer different titles can be acquired, 3) declining availability of special funds from governmental sources, especially LSCA,

TABLE II

RATE OF COLLECTION GROWTH IN 1980

Collections	Rate of Collection Growth					
	Greatly Increased	Somewhat	About The Same	Somewhat Lower	Much	(n=)
Outside New York State owning:						
2000+ films	1	2	5	4	2	(14)
-2000 films	-	3	1	2	-	(6)
In New York State owning:						
2000+ films	-	2	1	-	-	(3)
-2000 films	2	2	6	4	1	(15)
Total	3 (7.9%)	9 (23.7%)	13 (34.2%)	10 (26.3%)	3 (7.9%)	(38)

4) severe budget cuts and "constant threats of worse", 5) rising costs for maintenance and replacement footage especially in aging collections, 6) diversion of some film money to videocassette purchases.

Circulation Growth

Rates of circulation growth in 1980 (Table III) were: Greatly Increased = 21.6%, Somewhat Increased = 40.5%, About the Same = 21.6%, Somewhat Lower = 13.5%, Much Lower = 2.7%. More than sixty percent of the libraries that answered this question (n = 37) reported increased circulation.

Five of the six collections that reported 1980 declines in circulation were large collections outside New York State that owned more than 2000 films.

Only one collection indicated 1980 circulation was "much lower". This was blamed on the introduction of a service fee. The collections reporting 1980 circulation was "somewhat lower" gave the following explanations: one collection had suffered an 85% film budget cut and some heavily used films had been withdrawn. The lack of new films and replacement films had a negative effect. Another library noted that it was in a city with declining population and closing schools. (Circulation in the county film collection was increasing.) A third library paradoxically attributed decreased circulation to increased demand. By providing service through the mail to libraries in surrounding areas, films were in-transit and unavailable for circulation for longer periods of time. Also, a new catalog had not been published for several years. The administrator noted that circulation always increases when a new catalog appears. A fourth collection had purposely adopted new rules to discourage use by teachers who have been the primary users of the collection. With the decline of LSCA support, plans are being made to phase out service to this group.

The single New York library reporting circulation was down had intentionally set out to reduce it to manageable levels when an inspection machine broke down and one staff member left on maternity leave. This was accomplished by eliminating

TABLE III

RATE OF CIRCULATION GROWTH IN 1980

Collections	Rate of Circulation Growth					
	Greatly Increased	Somewhat	About The Same	Somewhat Lower	Much	(n=)
Outside New York State owning:						
2000+ films	2	2	4	4	1	(13)
-2000 films	1	4	1	-	-	(6)
In New York State owning:						
2000+ films	1	2	-	-	-	(3)
-2000 films	4	7	3	1	-	(15)
Total	8 (21.6%)	15 (40.5%)	8 (21.6%)	5 (13.5%)	1 (2.7%)	(37)

walk-in borrowing and enforcing a 60 minute limit on the amount of film borrowed.

It should be noted that decreased circulation rarely seemed to reflect decreased demand. Usually obstacles to availability of films were the cause.

Eight collections reported circulation was "greatly increased". Some attributed it to: population growth and a rapidly growing collection, a new policy which allows individuals to borrow films, lending of 16mm projectors to individuals for home viewing, release of a new catalog, more intensive publicity and promotion of services, acquisition of more films and newer films, acquisition of non-curriculum type films which are heavily used by both individuals and teachers. One respondent observed that financial austerities are causing groups that used to rent films and families that attended the movies to turn to the library for free loan materials.

Circulation was "somewhat increased" at fifteen collections. They also attributed it to such factors as: newer and more popular films, increased community awareness, and increased borrowing by individuals and schools. One had shifted its emphasis in acquisitions away from films for classrooms, and specialized audiences and towards films for broad general audiences.

Several mentioned an increasing demand for feature films and attributed some of their growth to their acquisition of more features. One respondent noted that 1980 figures would have been even higher but some feature film patrons are switching to videocassettes. Another noted that demand for films - especially features- is increasing beyond the ability of the library to handle despite the switch by some patrons to videocassettes, a pre-booking requirement of three weeks, and the solid booking of some features for a year in advance.

One New York State library acquired 75 feature films which resulted in increased programming at the branches. This same library, which has a pre-booking requirement, boosted circulation by installing an open shelf collection of 50 to

60 films which are available for walk-in borrowing.

More and better films contribute to circulation growth. One librarian noted that strengthening the children's collection had this effect. Another librarian attributed growth to more active promotion of services and to the provision of more programming assistance.

These statistics indicate circulation and the demand for film services is increasing in most of the public library film collections studied. Furthermore, it becomes apparent that film administrators can increase or depress circulation by their policies and activities and by the resources they provide.

Cutbacks and Expansions

Both film departments and systems are suffering cutbacks (Table IV). More than half (57.9%) those responding reported reductions within the film department and even more (78.9%) reported other departments of the library or system had experienced some setbacks. Indeed, in New York State, 88.9% of the systems had some cuts with 61.1% of film departments being affected. It should be noted that film departments did not seem to suffer more than other departments and often, apparently in recognition of the popularity and concrete achievements of the service (look at those circulation statistics in Table I) cutbacks were less than in other departments. In the areas of budget, staff, services, and collection growth (Table IVa), film departments seemed to fare better than the library as a whole. There were budget cuts in 42% of the film departments compared to 61% in the systems, staff cuts in 29% of the film departments and 61% of the systems, services reductions in 21% of the film departments and 39% of the systems, and collection growth cuts in 39% of the film departments and 50% of the systems. New York State libraries showed an even greater variance between film department cutbacks and system cutbacks (e.g. budget cuts in 33% of film departments and 67% of systems; services cuts in 17% of film departments and 50% of systems.)

TABLE IV

RECENT CUTBACKS AND EXPANSIONS IN FILM DEPARTMENTS

Collections (n=)		Film Department Had Recent		Other Departments Had Recent
Outside New York State owning:		Cutbacks	Expansions	Cutbacks
(14)	2000+ films	8	5[a]	11
(6)	-2000 films	3	3[b]	3
(20)	(total)	(11 = 55%)	(8 = 40%)	(14 = 70%)
In New York State owning:				
(3)	2000+ films	1	1[c]	2
(15)	-2000 films	10	6[d]	14
(18)	(total)	(11 = 61.1%)	(7 = 38.9%)	(16 = 88.9%)
(38)	Total	22 (57.9%)	15 (39.5%)	30 (78.9%)

[a]-1980/81 budget highest ever; cut in half for 81/82
-tremenduous growth; collection built from scratch 6 years ago
-videocassettes added
-videocassettes added
-enlarged facilities, increased budget and hours; videocassettes and production equipment acquired

[b]-budget increase; cutbacks predicted
-videocassette expansion
-new enlarged facility; more hours despite budget cuts

[c]- videocassettes and videodiscs acquired; some production for cable tv

[d]-videocassette expansion; funds to automate AV dept and network to other systems
-planning cable series
-additional funds for film purchase
-clerical worker added to help with growing video
-videocassette circulation and in-house viewing
- videocassettes and equipment acquired

TABLE IVa

AREAS OF CUTBACK IN FILM DEPARTMENTS

TOTAL (n=38)		Collections Outside New York 2000+ Films (n=14)	Collections Outside New York -2000 Films (n=6)	Collections Outside New York Total (n=20)	New York State Collections 2000+ Films (n=3)	New York State Collections -2000 Films (n=15)	New York State Collections Total (n=18)	Total 2000+ Films (n=17)	Total -2000 Films (n=21)
Budget Cuts-									
16(42%)	Film Dept.	7	3	10(50%)	-	6	6(33%)	7(41%)	9(43%)
23(61%)	Other Depts.	8	3	11(55%)	1	11	12(67%)	9(53%)	14(67%)
Staff Cuts-									
11(29%)	Film Dept.	6	1	7(35%)	-	4	4(22%)	6(35%)	5(24%)
23(61%)	Other Depts.	9	3	12(60%)	2	9	11(61%)	11(65%)	12(57%)
Hours Cuts-									
8(21%)	Film Dept.	2	1	3(15%)	1	4	5(28%)	3(18%)	5(24%)
10(26%)	Other Depts.	4	2	6(30%)	1	3	4(22%)	5(29%)	5(24%)
Services Cuts-									
8(21%)	Film Dept.	4	1	5(25%)	-	3	3(17%)	4(24%)	4(19%)
15(39%)	Other Depts.	5	1	6(30%)	1	8	9(50%)	6(35%)	9(43%)
Collection Growth Cuts-									
15(39%)	Film Dept.	7	2	9(45%)	-	6	6(33%)	7(41%)	8(38%)
19(50%)	Other Depts.	6	2	8(40%)	-	11	11(61%)	6(35%)	13(62%)

The near future appears ominous in view of these cuts and predicted decline in funds from federal sources. One respondent reported the department budget will be cut by 50% in 1981-82; another by 40%; a third reports there will be no funds allocated for non-book materials in 1982. (Audiovisual staff at this library has already been cut from nine to two persons.) In recent years, three New York State systems, including one that didn't complete the questionnaire, have eliminated the position of audiovisual consultant.

Approximately 40% of those responding did report some recent expansions within the film department; most of these, however, were related to video - the introduction or expansion of videocassette collections being the most common report. The seven reporting film related expansions included a library in a growing city in which the film collection was built from scratch in the past six years, and one which has benefitted from a substantial tax levy which led to enlarged facilities and expanded hours. Another reported a new facility and more hours despite a budget cut. One library administrator indicated the department had budget increases for the past three years, but predicted cutbacks in the future. Similarly, a different administrator said the 80-81 budget was the largest ever but it was cut in half for 81-82. In New York, one small collection received an additional $5,000 for films despite a cut in book funds as a result of the popularity of the service. One of the most interesting expansions is at the Mid-Hudson system in New York - funds have been allocated to automate AV services in 1981 and to network the database to other systems, presumably for on-line booking and resource sharing.

Film Users

In a previous study[1], twenty-two New York State film administrators were asked to name some groups that were frequent film borrowers and to identify some types of films that were among the most popular with patrons. The groups most mentioned were: Nursing homes (mentioned by 91%), churches and church groups (86%), social clubs (64%), social service agencies (50%), day care centers (45%), hospitals (45%), scouts (41%), Y's (36%), youth groups and centers (36%), correctional institutions and facilities (36%), and senior citizen's groups and centers (32%), Types of films most mentioned were: children's films (100%), comedies (77%), feature films (64%), travel films (59%), films on animals and nature (36%), recreational and entertainment films (23%), and Disney films (23%).

In the present study, administrators were presented with six categories of uses and users and requested to rank them according to which accounted for the heaviest use of the film collection. Responses are tabulated in Table V. Two points emerge clearly. First, there was great variety in the answers. Each of the six categories was ranked high by some respondents and low by others. "Institutions and Hospitals (including nursing homes)" was ranked #1 by 17% and #1 or #2 by 46%. (However, 61% of New York libraries ranked it #1 or #2 compared to only 29% of those outside the state.) "Clubs and Organizations" was ranked #1 by 9% and #1 or #2 by 35%. "In-Library Programming" was ranked #1 by 14% and #1 or #2 by 28%. "Individuals for Home Use" was ranked #1 by 15%, and

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1. Joseph W. Palmer Interviews with New York State Public Library Film Administrators. 100 p. School of Information and Library Studies, SUNY at Buffalo, January 1980. (These interviews, but not the statistical summaries, are included in: The Availability and Use of Experimental Films in Public Libraries of New York State. 262 p. ERIC, ED 184 542, October 1980.

TABLE V

CATEGORIES OF FILM USERS RANKED BY AMOUNT OF USE

(n=)		Respondents Ranking #1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	not served
SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS								
	Outside New York State:							
(14)	2000+ films	7	-	2	-	1	2	2
(5)	-2000 films	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
(19)	(total)	12	0	2	0	1	2	2
	In New York State:							
(3)	2000+ films	1	-	-	1	-	-	1
(15)	-2000 films	2	2	-	-	1	1	9
(18)	(total)	3	2	0	1	1	1	10
(37)[a]	TOTAL	15 (41%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	1 (3%)	2 (5%)	3 (8%)	12 (32%)
INSTITUTIONS AND HOSPITALS (including nursing homes)								
	Outside New York State:							
(12)	2000+ films	1	2	1	4	3	1	
(5)	-2000 films	-	2	2	-	-	1	
(17)	(total)	1	4	3	4	3	2	
	In New York State:							
(3)	2000+ films	1	-	1	-	-	1	
(15)	-2000 films	4	6	1	4	-	-	
(18)	(total)	5	6	2	4	0	1	
(35)[a]	TOTAL	6 (17%)	10 (29%)	5 (14%)	8 (23%)	3 (9%)	3 (9%)	
CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS								
	Outside New York State:							
(12)	2000+ films	1	3	2	4	1	1	
(5)	-2000 films	-	2	-	2	1	-	
(17)	(total)	1	5	2	6	2	1	
	In New York State:							
(3)	2000+ films	-	2	-	1	-	-	
(14)	-2000 films	2	2	4	4	1	1	
(17)	(total)	2	4	4	5	1	1	
(34)[a]	TOTAL	3 (9%)	9 (26%)	6 (18%)	11 (32%)	3 (9%)	2 (6%)	
IN-LIBRARY PROGRAMMING								
	Outside New York State:							
(12)	2000+ films	1	2	-	2	5	2	
(5)	-2000 films	-	-	1	1	1	2	
(17)	(total)	1	2	1	3	6	4	
	In New York State:							
(3)	2000+ films	1	-	1	1	-	-	
(15)	-2000 films	3	3	2	2	2	3	
(18)	(total)	4	3	3	3	2	3	
(35)[a]	TOTAL	5 (14%)	5 (14%)	4 (11%)	6 (17%)	8 (23%)	7 (20%)	

TABLE V (page 2)

(n=)	INDIVIDUALS FOR HOME USE	Respondents Ranking #1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	not served
	Outside New York State:							
(12)	2000+ films	3	3	1	-	1	3	1
(5)	-2000 films	-	-	2	1	2	-	-
(17)	(total)	3	3	3	1	3	3	1
	In New York State:							
(3)	2000+ films	-	-	1	-	2	-	-
(14)	-2000 films	2	-	2	3	5	1	1
(17)	(total)	2	0	3	3	7	1	1
(34)[a]	TOTAL	5 (15%)	3 (9%)	6 (18%)	4 (12%)	10 (29%)	4 (12%)	2 (6%)

	SERVICE AGENCIES (including social service, day care, sr. citizens centers)						
	Outside New York State:						
(12)	2000+ films	-	2	6	3	-	1
(5)	-2000 films	-	1	-	1	1	2
(17)	(total)	0	3	6	4	1	3
	In New York State:						
(3)	2000+ films	-	1	-	-	1	1
(14)	-2000 films	2	2	5	1	3	1
(17)	(total)	2	3	5	1	4	2
(34)[a]	TOTAL	2 (6%)	6 (18%)	11 (32%)	5 (15%)	5 (15%)	5 (15%)

[a]Not all libraries responded or responded fully, hence the differences in totals

#1 or #2 by 24%. "Service Agencies (including social service, day care, sr. citizens centers")was ranked #1 by 6% and #1 or #2 by 24%.

However, it is the statistics for "Schools and Teachers" that are most impressive. This group was ranked #1 by 41% and #1 or #2 by 46%. This despite the fact 32% of respondents do not serve schools and teachers. Of those who do serve this group, 60% rated it #1 and 68% rated it #1 and #2. This is the second point to emerge clearly: where schools are served, they tend to be the major users of the collection. Here again there was a difference between New York libraries and the others. Fifty-six percent of New York libraries do not serve schools compared to only 11% of respondents outside the state. It may also be relevant to note that only 38% of the remaining New York libraries ranked schools and teachers #1 compared to 71% of libraries outside the state that serve this group. A contributing factor could be the fact that many of the New York systems that serve schools levy service fees on them that are not borne by other users.

The questionnaire also listed eleven types of users and asked the administrator to indicate if their use of the film collection was "Heavy", "Moderate", or "Light" and if there was a significant increase or decrease in utilization by this group.

"Schools and Teachers" were identified as "Heavy" or "Moderate" users by 92% of those that serve this group. Seventy percent identified their use as "Heavy", and 48% reported use by schools and teachers was increasing.

Film use by other client categories was reported to be as follows:

Nursing Homes.....	100% H/M	(56% Heavy)	(0% Light)
Children's Clubs and Organizations.	86% H/M	(54% Heavy)	(14% Light)
Day Care Centers.....	92% H/M	(49% Heavy)	(8% Light)
Individuals for Home Use.....	76% H/M	(42% Heavy)	(24% Light)
Sr. Citizens Centers.....	93% H/M	(32% Heavy)	(7% Light)

Adult Clubs and Organizations... 89% H/M (32% Heavy) (11% Light)
Hospitals..... 82% H/M (21% Heavy) (18% Light)
Social Service Agencies..... 79% H/M (18% Heavy) (21% Light)
Prisons and Jails..... 47% H/M (18% Heavy) (53% Light)
Government Agencies..... 32% H/M (0% Heavy) (68% Light)

Use by individuals was the category showing greatest variation between libraries (42% Heavy/24% Light). It seems highly probable that at least some of these "individuals" are teachers - especially in libraries where schools are not served or where substantial fees are imposed for such use. Use by individuals was also the category most frequently cited as exhibiting increased film use. The percentages of respondents reporting increasing utilization for the various categories were:

Individuals for Home Use..... 58%
Childrens Clubs/Organizations.... 44%
Nursing Homes..... 41%
Day Care Centers..... 40%
Adult Clubs/Organizations..... 40%
Senior Citizens Centers..... 32%
Social Service Agencies..... 32%
Hospitals..... 21%
Prisons and Jails..... 18%
Government Agencies..... 8%

No category was identified by more than two respondents as exhibiting decreased film use.

In-Library Programming

Administrators were questioned about in-library programs for children, adults, young adults, and families. The responses (Table VI) show that programming for children is very heavy and increasing, while programming for other categories is only moderate. Adult programming appears to be increasing moderately, but programming for young adults and families was reported to be decreasing by nearly as many respondents as reported them to be increasing.

Children's programming was reported to be Heavy by 73%; Heavy or Moderate by 97%; Light by 3%. Increased programming was cited by 46%; decreased programming by none.

TABLE VI

QUANTITIES OF IN-LIBRARY PROGRAMMING FOR VARIOUS AUDIENCES

(n=)		Respondents Indicating PROGRAMMING IS: Heavy	Moderate	Light	INCREASING: Greatly	Moderately	DECREASING: Greatly	Moderately
PROGRAMMING FOR CHILDREN								
	Outside New York State:							
(14)	2000+ films	11	3	-	2	3	-	-
(6)	-2000 films	4	1	1	-	2	-	-
(20)	(total)	15 (75%)	4	1	2 (10%)	5 (25%)	0	0
	In New York State:							
(3)	2000+ films	3	-	-	1	1	-	-
(14)	-2000 films	9	5	-	3	5	-	-
(17)	(total)	12 (71%)	5	0	4 (24%)	6 (35%)	0	0
(37)[a]	TOTAL	27 (73%)	9 (24%)	1 (3%)	6 (16%)	11 (30%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
PROGRAMMING FOR ADULTS								
	Outside New York State:							
(14)	2000+ films	1	5	8	-	1	-	2
(6)	-2000 films	1	4	1	-	2	-	-
(20)	(total)	2 (10%)	9	9	0	3 (15%)	0	2 (10%)
	In New York State:							
(3)	2000+ films	1	1	1	-	2	-	-
(14)	-2000 films	1	8	5	1	4	-	1
(17)	(total)	2 (12%)	9	6	1 (6%)	6 (35%)	0	1 (6%)
(37)[a]	TOTAL	4 (11%)	18 (49%)	15 (40%)	1 (3%)	9 (24%)	0 (0%)	3 (8%)
PROGRAMMING FOR YOUNG ADULTS								
	Outside New York State:							
(14)	2000+ films	-	5	9	-	1	-	2
(6)	-2000 films	2	1	3	-	1	-	-
(20)	(total)	2 (10%)	6	12	0	2 (10%)	0	2 (10%)
	In New York State:							
(3)	2000+ films	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
(14)	-2000 films	1	6	7	1	5	-	3
(17)	(total)	1 (6%)	9	7	1 (6%)	5 (29%)	0	3 (18%)
(37)[a]	TOTAL	3 (8%)	15 (41%)	19 (51%)	1 (3%)	7 (19%)	0 (0%)	5 (14%)
PROGRAMMING FOR FAMILIES								
	Outside New York State:							
(14)	2000+ films	-	7	7	-	1	-	2
(5)	-2000 films	-	2	3	-	-	-	-
19	(total)	0 (0%)	9	10	0	1 (6%)	0	2 (11%)
	In New York State:							
(3)	2000+ films	-	1	2	-	-	-	-
(14)	-2000 films	1	6	7	1	2	-	2
(17)	(total)	1 (6%)	7	9	1 (6%)	2 (12%)	0	2 (12%)
(36)[a]	TOTAL	1 (3%)	16 (44%)	19 (53%)	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	0 (0%)	4 (11%)

[a] Not all libraries responded or responded fully, hence the differences in totals.

Adult programming was reported to be Heavy by 11%; Heavy or Moderate by 60%; Light by 40%. Increased programming was cited by 27%; decreased programming by 8%.

Young Adult programming was reported to be Heavy by 8%; Heavy or Moderate by 49%; Light by 51%. Increased programming was cited by 22%; decreased programming by 14%.

Family programming was reported to be Heavy by 3%; Heavy or Moderate by 47%; Light by 53%. Increased programming was cited by 11%;decreased programming by 11%.

Other questions related to programming elicited the following information: Films shown are usually from the library's own collection although two libraries frequently rent films for programs and five others do so occasionally

Adult programs tend to consist of groups of short films or longer non-theatrical films. However, Hollywood features are also widely shown - especially in New York libraries.

Programs for adults, young adults, and families usually consist of "just films". Some libraries occasionally provide program notes, discussion, a lecture, speaker or other activity in association with film programs, but only a scattered number do any of these on a regular basis.

Children's programs also often consist of "just films", but very frequently there are associated activities. Story-telling is the most common accompaniment to films, but puppet shows, discussion, and crafts are often used too.

More experimentation in using films in conjunction with other resources or activities in libraries seems to be desirable in order to tap their full potential.

Use of Cooperative and Centralized Collections

Administrators were asked if their library obtains any 16mm films from

cooperative or centralized collections that also serve other libraries (i.e., circuits, cooperatives, state-wide film collections). They were asked about the percentage of the total films used/circulated that are from such sources and about the degree to which they are satisfied with the operation of the cooperative collections.

Only one of the fourteen collections outside New York State that own more than 2,000 films obtains films from a cooperative collection. It gets a small number of films (2%) from a federated county system and is very satisfied with the arrangement. At least five of these large collections, however, are themselves regional collections that provide films to independent libraries and systems.

All six of the collections outside New York State with fewer than 2,000 films obtain some films from cooperative or centralized collections and report satisfaction with their operation. One obtains 0.5% of its films from interlibrary loan with seventeen other systems in the state. Another obtains 5% of its films from two state-wide film circuits, while a third obtains 5% from the state library's collection. A fourth obtains 10% of its films from a regional film circuit. The administrator noted that minor problems encountered include the failure of the previous library on the circuit to properly care for films. Two collections rely heavily on cooperative resources. One, a small collection of 600 films, obtains 25% of the films circulated from a film circuit and the state library collection. It also rents some films for month-long periods from a university film library. The other collection (1200 films) gets 40% of the films circulated via a cooperative arrangement between six systems in the Virginia and Maryland suburbs of Washington.

The three New York collections of more than 2,000 films included Suffolk

Cooperative Library System. It obtains a very few films from the recently formed Long Island Resources Consortium of Colleges and Universities, but the film administrator is very optimistic about the future potential of this consortium. Neither of the other two large collections uses films from cooperative collections, although Rochester Public Library, one of the two, is itself a major source of films for libraries in its county and its regional systems.

Thirteen of the fifteen New York collections owning fewer than 2,000 films obtain some films from cooperative or centralized collections. However, none receives more than 6% of the films used from such sources, and seven receive 2% or less. Eight administrators reported growing cooperation and resource sharing with neighboring systems. This includes inter-library loan and cooperative acquisitions arrangements, an audiovisual consortium of three library systems in the Finger Lakes, Southern Tier, Binghamton region, and sharing of Rochester Public Library films through the Monroe County and Pioneer Library systems. As mentioned previously, the Mid-Hudson system will be automating its audiovisual department this year and networking it to neighboring systems. Such on-line booking arrangements should ultimately be widespread and facilitate much greater resource sharing.

Ten New York collections obtain a small number of films from the state library film collection, but most were dissatisfied with the collection and the service. They complained about the smallness of the collection, that films were dated and poorly maintained, that no new films were being added, that delivery was often unreliable, and that there was no current, usable catalog.[1] A number of respondents

[1] A draft version of a new catalog was subsequently distributed by the State Library in September 1981

seemed bitter about the failure of the State Library to assume a leadership role in the area of film and other media services in recent years.

The Future: Can Video Replace Film?

The administrators were asked if they believed 16mm could be replaced with video. The majority seemed to consider this as something which might eventually happen, but few believed it was possible at the present time.

The single area of greatest growth within public library film departments at the present time is the acquisition and expansion of half-inch videocassette collections. Nineteen of the thirty-eight libraries already own videocassette collections. Fifteen own half-inch cassettes; fourteen own three-quarter inch cassettes. With a few exceptions, videocassettes are administered by the film department. A dramatic increase in public library circulation of half-inch videocassettes in the next few years appears certain. Demand for videocassettes is increasing, but, as has been shown, so is demand for 16mm films. Video expansion should not be at the expense of 16mm, but, because of economic problems, in many libraries it will be.

Bob Gurn, Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, considering a possible transition towards video, surveyed film users and found the bulk of them would not be able to substitute video for film.

Videocassettes are attractive to administrators on several counts. Half-inch cassettes offer a wide selection of low-cost entertainment features which are unavailable in 16mm or only available at very high cost. (One librarian remarked she paid $65 for a videocassette of a movie she had earlier leased for five years in 16mm for a cost of $1800.) Furthermore, they can be handled routinely without the expensive inspection, maintenance, and repair costs of film.

Film users cannot substitute video for 16mm because:

1. the small video image is unsatisfactory for large group viewing and aesthetically inferior even for small group viewing.

2. present film users usually do not own videocassette equipment.

3. software available in 16mm is not duplicated by what is available in video.

Film borrowers and videocassette borrowers tend to be different clienteles. Films tend to be used by groups - often large groups. Video borrowers tend to be individuals interested in home entertainment. It could be argued that, in terms of total viewers reached, 16mm is often more cost effective than video. Indeed, half-inch videocassettes are aimed at the home market and, for this reason, little software beyond entertainment features is available. Three-quarter inch has more varied software but price is often equivalent to 16mm and equipment is not widely owned outside of schools.

There was some disagreement about the importance of image quality. Gary Sanford, Onondaga County Library System, feels the quality of the film image and the nature of the film viewing environment make film a more compelling medium than video, and that it is one to which the viewer gives closer, more undivided attention. Alice Traister, Wayne and Ontario Library System, also commented on the salutory effects of the superior film image. However, another respondent expressed the opinion that "most of the public could care less about picture definition, focus, etc.". He maintained that people are being conditioned by small screen television watching into being "an uncaring viewing audience", and noted that even movie houses are now splitting into small screen multi-theaters.

Those who felt video will eventually replace film were divided on how rapidly technological developments will occur and be disseminated. Sixteen millimeter

appears certain to remain a viable library medium for at least the next decade and possibly considerably beyond that.

Will Film Service in Public Libraries be Phased Out in the Next Twenty Years?

Administrators were asked: "Do you believe public library film service will be phased out in the next twenty years?" and given a choice of three replies. Eleven (27.5%) marked "almost entirely"; Nineteen (47.5%) marked "to some extent"; Ten (25%) marked "no".

Most respondents based their replies on their expectations concerning whether and how rapidly 16mm would be replaced by new video technologies. Factors cited which could bear upon the viability of 16mm film service during the next two decades included:

1. The rapidity with which large screen video will be perfected and standardized and owned by library film clients

2. Whether the investment already made by libraries and institutional film users in films and film equipment will result in an on-going demand for 16mm even after large screen video is widely available

3. If 16mm films will still be produced in the quantity and variety needed for effective service and at an acceptable price

4. Whether library administration will continue to support the provision of film service

5. Whether society will continue to support libraries

6. The possibility of a revolutionary transformation in the communications environment which would totally change the way print and non-print messages are stored and disseminated in our society.

It seems probable that high definition large screen video will be perfected in the next twenty years. Respondents differed in their opinions about whether

the format would be standardized by that time and whether the innovation would be so widely owned that it would be able to substitute for 16mm in satisfying patron demands. Some predicted this would be the case. Others felt there would be a long transitional period in which 16mm and video would be competing technologies each with its own viability. Traister observed that technological innovations are slow to make progress in rural and economically depressed areas and noted that, in such locales, 16mm will probably be displaced very slowly by new technologies. Certainly, the proliferation of new technologies will be controlled to a great extent by the economic health of the society - not just in rural areas but everywhere. Some felt that, unless the economy improves significantly, patrons will be slow to acquire new equipment and will cling to the tested resource of 16mm films in which they and their institutions have already substantial hardware investments.

Demand for video formats is certain to grow and draw some funds away from 16mm. However, not only demand but also supply will affect the fate of film service. The cost of film could conceivably continue its present spiral. Ed Peltier, Boston Public Library, predicts possible cost reductions if non-silver base film is developed. However, the expensiveness of film is due not only to the cost of materials but also to the lengthy processing required to duplicate a film. It is possible that producers, finding a market for video, may start to abandon the 16mm format during the next two decades. Fewer and fewer items may be available in 16mm and only at a disproportionately high price.

William Speed, Los Angeles Public Library, noted that video has an unmistakable appeal to administrators because of the inherent economies and also for its technological charisma. The savings in per item cost, and especially in routine handling will be increasingly attractive. Tom Bindeman, Nioga Library

System, also observed that the flexibility of video - the recording capacity, the ease of operation, and general versatility - will make video far more popular among the general population than 16mm ever was. Satisfying this growing demand is likely to receive high priority among library administrators. "Twenty years is a long time," said another respondent, "probably 16mm will be replaced by video but the demand for AV services should increase not decrease." "If the entire library does not begin to serve a wider spectrum of the general population, it may be phased out," warned another.

Several respondents cited changes more far-reaching than large screen video that could alter demand for 16mm service. Discs, cable, and satellite were mentioned. One respondent commented that "chips could replace all media by the year 2000".

Mike Miller, Mid-Hudson Library System, summed up his position as follows: "Libraries will have to come to grips with information technology in all its forms if they are to continue to serve the public. The answer lies in advancing technology and the acceptance it finds with the general public. If the public goes video - libraries must go video. If the public buys videodisc - libraries must also buy disc. To ignore information trends set by the public is elitist folly." (This, of course, does not mean that the library must abandon productive services still in demand by the community and only pursue the latest innovations. A real crisis will occur if and when the library is forced to choose between film and video at a time when there is a strong demand for both.) Miller continues, "As information becomes power, the place of libraries will be seriously challenged by commercial vendors. The ability to tap into the growing telecommunications networks will be increasingly important for the survival of libraries."

Technology has a way of setting its own timetables. Video and other technologies will eventually replace 16mm film. For today, for the next decade, and

probably beyond, the need and demand for public library film service will continue and possibly increase.

The Next Five Years

Administrators were presented with a list of eighteen possible developments and asked to check those which seemed likely to occur in their library in the next five years. Thirty-eight answered this question (Table VII). Most frequently checked were statements relative to video expansion, slight reduction of 16mm services, greater cooperation between film collections, and changes in film utilization by schools and teachers and for in-library programming. Least frequently checked were statements relative to elimination or severe reduction of 16mm services, to the reduction of in-house video production, and to the prospect of video circulation exceeding 16mm circulation in terms of the total viewers reached.

Most (79%) of the thirty-eight administrators who answered this question anticipate videocassette collections will be started or greatly expanded in their library in the next five years. Nearly half (47%) make the same prediction for videodiscs. Eleven (29%) believe video circulation will grow so rapidly that it will exceed 16mm in number of items circulated although only three (8%) believe it will exceed 16mm in total viewers reached. More than half (58%) foresee greater use of video for in-library programming, and 39% anticipate increased in-house video production. It could be significant that the three respondents (8%) who anticipate less in-house production are from systems that were engaged in ambitious video production activities until budgetary problems caused cutbacks.

Administrators' predictions for film service were a marked contrast to video predictions. Only six respondents (16%) expect an expansion of film service in the next five years, while twenty-nine (76%) foresee a reduction. Twenty-six (68%) expect a slight reduction and three (8%) expect a severe reduction. None expect film service to be eliminated.

TABLE VII

ADMINISTRATORS' PREDICTIONS FOR THEIR LIBRARIES
DURING THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Total Administrators Percent	Number (n=38)	Prediction	Administrators From: Outside New York n=20 (14/6)*	New York n=18 (3/15)* @
79%	30	Great Expansion of Videocassette Collection	18 (14/4)	12 (3/9)
68%	26	Slight Reduction of 16mm Film Service	14 (11/3)	12 (2/10)
58%	22	Greater Use of Video in Library Programs	9 (7/2)	13 (3/10)
50%	19	Cooperative Agreements with Other Public Libraries for Interlibrary Loan of Films	5 (4/1)	14 (2/12)
47%	18	Great Expansion of Videodisc Collection	10 (5/5)	8 (3/5)
47%	18	Greater Use of Films by Schools/Teachers	11 (7/4)	7 (1/6)
42%	16	Greater Use of Films in Library Programs	12 (7/5)	4 (0/4)
39%	15	More Video Production In-House	8 (6/2)	7 (3/4)
29%	11	Amount of Video Circulation Will Exceed 16mm Circulation in Number of Items Circulated	8 (5/3)	3 (1/2)
29%	11	Greater Reliance on Circuits, Cooperatives, and State-Wide Centralized 16mm Collections	6 (4/2)	5 (0/5)
16%	6	Expansion of 16mm Film Service	4 (2/2)	2 (1/1)
16%	6	Less Reliance on Circuits, Cooperatives, and State-Wide Centralized 16mm Collections	4 (2/2)	2 (0/2)
16%	6	Less Use of Films by Schools/Teachers	1 (1/0)	5 (2/3)
16%	6	Less Use of Films in Library Programs	1 (1/0)	5 (2/3)
8%	3	Amount of Video Circulation Will Exceed 16mm Circulation in Total Viewers Reached	2 (2/0)	1 (1/0)
8%	3	Severe Reduction of 16mm Film Service	2 (1/1)	1 (0/1)
8%	3	Less Video Production In-House	1 (1/0)	2 (0/2)
0%	0	Elimination of 16mm Film Service	0	0

* Total (collections with 2000+ films/-2000 films)

@ representing 16 collections (2 collections had responses from both city and county administrators; 2 other respondents did not answer this question)

While eleven administrators (29%) foresee greater reliance on circuits, cooperatives, and state-wide film collections, six (16%), foresee less reliance on such resources. On the other hand, two-thirds (67%) of New York State administrators expect cooperative agreements for interlibrary loan of films to develop or expand in the next five years and 25% of respondents from outside the state also anticipate this.

Nearly half the administrators (47%) anticipate greater utilization of library films by schools and teachers, while six (16%) expect such utilization will decline.

More than half (60%) of the administrators from outside New York State expect more utilization of films for in-library programs while 20% expect it to decline. New York State administrators were less optimistic - only 22% foresee an increase in use of films for library programs and 11% believe such utilization will decline.

Summary and Conclusions

Films began to have an impact in public libraries in the early forties. "Film forums" used documentary films in libraries to reach the people and generate public discussion of important issues. During World War II, the first important public library film collection was started in Cleveland. After that, the number of collections increased rapidly, spurred on by two Carnegie Corporation supported projects - the ALA Office of the Film Advisor and demonstration film circuits in Ohio and Missouri. During this period, the emphasis was still on films for adult education and for group discussion.

During the sixties and seventies, a spectacular expansion of public library film collections occured due to federal monies being channeled into educational and social institutions. Not only did this lead to more and larger film collections, but it resulted in a much enlarged clientele of service organizations

and institutions that received government support and owned 16mm projectors.

Later in the seventies, reversals in the economy led to governmental austerities and to constant concern in libraries about whether government funds would continue to be available. At the same time, the signs of an imminent communications revolution that would include diverse video innovations began to be seen. In the vangard of this revolution was the home video cassette. In November 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected President on a platform that advocated severe cutbacks in government programs.

Libraries today face an uncertain future. They are on the threshold of a period of great economic and technological change. It is a time in which libraries must evaluate, defend, and optimize the utilization of their services while simultaneously planning to meet the challenges and grasp the opportunities that lie ahead.

In order to collect information that might help public library film administrators with self-assessment and planning, a questionnaire was sent to administrators of 63 public library film collections including each of the 23 collections in New York State. Replies were received from representatives of 38 collections; of these 18 were in New York State. Collections ranged from 600 to over 10,000 films with nearly half (17) owning more than 2000 films. All but three New York collections contained fewer than 2,000 films.

Responses showed that film is a much used resource that serves large and diverse audiences within the community. Viewers reached in 1980 ranged from 152,710 in a small collection of 748 films serving a rural area to 3,576,686 in an urban collection of 3,100 films. Furthermore, a majority of respondents indicated demand for films is increasing; 62.1% stated that 1980 circulation showed an increase over previous years. Several commented that they are servicing nearly

as many requests as they can physically handle and some indicated circulation was limited - not be demand - but by availability of desired resources. In one collection, 80% of first choice requests can not be filled despite a three week advance booking requirement. (It may be significant that 40% of the films circulated by this collection are obtained by interlibrary loan from resources shared by five other large suburban collections.)

One of the six collections (16.2%) reporting decreased circulation in 1980 attributed it to increased demand. Be serving distant communities through the mail, film availability was reduced for longer periods of time. Two others indicated they had purposely suppressed circulation as a result of staff and equipment shortages or anticipated funding cuts. This was accomplished by imposing more rigid restrictions on borrowing. Another respondent stated that the circulation declined due to the introduction of a service fee, while a fifth attributed it to budget cuts than reduced the ability of the library to acquire a new and replacement films.

Administrators can, therefore, exercise considerable control over circulation by their policies and practices. The following were cited as factors leading to increased circulation: changing policies to allow individuals to borrow films, lending projectors, publishing a new updated catalog, acquiring more and newer films, acquiring films with wider general appeal, acquiring feature films, making films available for walk-in borrowing, more active promotion and publicizing of resources and services, increased programming assistance.

Who uses public library films? There is considerable variation from collection to collection in the amount of use by various clienteles, but the following were identified as heavy or moderate users by at least two-thirds of the respondents nursing homes (100%),senior citizen's centers (93%),day care centers (92%),adult clubs and organizations(89%), children's clubs and organizations (86%), hospitals

(82%), and social service agencies (79%).

Use by schools and teachers is especially interesting since 32% of the collections do not serve this category of user. Of those that do, 92% reported heavy or moderate use, and 60% identified them as the no. 1 users of the collection. It becomes apparent, then, that when schools are served, they tend to be extremely heavy users of library film resources.

In-library programming using film tends to be directed towards children. More than half the respondents also have at least moderate adult programming as well. Heavy in-library programming for children was reported by 73% of respondents (93% Heavy or Moderate) compared to 11% for adults (60% H/M), 8% for young adults (49% H/M), and 6% for families (47% H/M).

Children's programs often consist of "just films", but very frequently other activities accompany the films - especially story-telling, puppet shows, discussion, and crafts. Adult programs are usually "just films". Programs may consist of groups of short films, non-theatrical features, or (especially in New York libraries) Hollywood features.

Respondents indicated film use was increasing most in the following areas: individuals for home use (reported to be growing in 58% of collections), schools and teachers (48%), in-library children's programming (46%), children's clubs and organizations (44%), nursing homes (41%), day care centers (40%), and adult clubs and organizations (40%). Some administrators suggested the present economic conditions are causing those who formerly relied on commercial film rental agencies or moving picture theaters to turn increasingly to the public library for films.

Economic conditions are affecting public libraries and film departments too. Most respondents (78.9%) indicated their systems had suffered recent cutbacks and 57.9% had had cutbacks in the film department. Furthermore, there is an air of

pessimism concerning the near future. Many administrators expect further cuts. One stated in 1981-82 the film budget will be cut by 50%, another by 40%, and a third large public library reported there will be no audiovisual funds in 1982. Within the past few years, three New York State public library systems have eliminated the position of audiovisual consultant.

In contrast, excepting video related developments, only seven respondents (18.4%) indicated there had been significant expansion of department resources and services in recent years. Ten (26.3%) did note expansions in video - usually the initiation or growth of a half-inch videocassette collection.

While 31.6% of respondents indicated the rate of collection growth was increased in 1980 compared to 34.2% reporting a decrease, several of those reporting growth predicted a decline in 1981 and others were able to expand their collections in 1980 only because they had received special funds from government or government supported agencies.

Those reporting a decline attributed it to: declining government subsidy, the increasing cost of 16mm films, budget cuts, increasing patron demand for feature-length films, rising costs of maintenance and replacement footage for aging collections, and the diversion of some 16mm funds to videocassette purchases.

Larger collections tended to make little use of cooperatives, circuits, and state-wide film collections. However, a number were themselves resource collections serving independent systems and libraries in the region.

Collections with fewer than 2000 films tended to make some use of such resources (most obtain under 6% of the films used/circulated from such sources). Several make heavy use of cooperative collections, circuits, or state library collections and obtain from 10% up to 40% of their films this way. Generally, respondents were pleased with such arrangements and reported only minor problems.

The exception was the New York State Library film collection which has severely cut its resources and services in recent years. Administrators complained about the size and currency of the collection, the unavailability of a current catalog at that time, and the reliability of film delivery. Several expressed great distress over what they felt to be the State Library's abdication of a leadership role in the area of audiovisual services in recent years. New York collections are increasingly cooperating with each other - through interlibrary loan and cooperative acquisitions. The Mid-Hudson Library System is automating its audiovisual department in 1981 and plans to network the data base to other systems.

Looking ahead, most administrators (76%) expect some reduction of film services in the next five years at their library but only 8% anticipate this reduction will be severe. In contrast, 79% believe videocassette collections will be started or greatly increased at their library during the same period and 49% make this prediction for videodiscs as well.

Video cannot at the present time substitute for 16mm service because film users tend to be groups that do not own video equipment. Furthermore, the small video image can not meet their needs, nor is the variety of software available in half-inch format sufficiently diverse. At the present time, demand for video is increasing dramatically but, for the most part, among individuals for home use who are not users of the 16mm collection. Video growth should not be at the expense of 16mm resources. Because of financial stringencies, however, in many libraries it will be.

Administrators were divided about the long term prospects for public library film service. Seventy-five percent believe it will be at least partially phased out by 2001. In the opinion of most, this will depend on how rapidly large screen, high definition video is perfected and standardized and owned by current film users.

Much will depend on the economy during the eighties and nineties. Many administrators feel this transition will occur very slowly and that, especially in rural areas, the demand for 16mm will continue for a very long time.

A few respondents suggested that technology may have so totally transformed media formats (both print and non-print) and their dissemination through such developments as disc, chip, cable and satellite that all current approaches to library service will be obsolete by that date. In any event, libraries will have to be flexible and responsive, identifying and responding to community needs in an evolving society if they hope to survive.

After nearly forty years of growth, public library film service has established itself as an important, much-used resource that serves a large and diverse cross-section of the community. In 1981, film service is approaching a critical stage in its history - challenged first by serious economic cutbacks as government funds become less and less available, and then by the burgeoning demand for home video formats. Film service can not now nor in the near future be replaced by video. Demand for film service is on the increase. Film administrators must continue to demonstrate and publicize the contribution their resources make to the community and the library while simultaneously seeking ways to maximize the effectiveness of the collection, and responding to the real, important - but different - demand for video resources. It is quite a challenge and one that will require serious thought and creative action.